

(Mrs. CLAYTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LARSON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MORELLA addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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#### HEATING OIL CRISIS IN NORTHEAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACCI) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, today in the Northeast, we are confronted with a heating oil crisis of epic proportions. We have seen the price of petroleum skyrocket 166 percent over the course of a year. The diesel fuel that is required in order to move goods from one end of the State to the markets in Boston and New York has gone over \$2 a gallon. There are potatoes in storage of the current crop. It is estimated that there are 16,000 per hundredweight that were cultivated and grown and that are in storage and 13,000 of them are still there, unable to be moved to market, and if they are forced to stay there, the United States Government, the United States Department of Agriculture will have to pick up the tab. We have many sectors of the economy that we have seen a negative impact. Airline ticket prices have had surcharges. There have been traffic and tourism and economic development that has not taken place because of the higher fuel cost. We had a meeting last week with the Secretary of Energy in the Longworth House Office Building where over 40 Members, Democratic and Republican and Independent, all voiced the concerns of the citizens and the constituents that we all represent to the Secretary that the action of the administration was not sufficient given the crisis that was confronting people.

In my State of Maine, we are confronted with double hardships, because in our State which is 36th in per capita wage income, where people have a hard time making ends meet, anyway, have very few dollars for disposable income. Yet they have seen their oil bills double and triple. Maine's older population, they are a poorer population, they are living in a rural area that depend upon fuel and utilities to be able to stay warm, to be able to make sure

that they are getting their goods and medicine, and to be forced to be choosing between fuel, food and medications is a triple hardship for these people.

We have been asking for a concerted effort, a comprehensive approach to this situation here with the Federal Energy Secretary Richardson who is coming to Maine and to Boston tomorrow as part of an energy summit. We are asking the President to engage in strong diplomacy with OPEC and non-OPEC states, because within our region of the country, most of the petroleum and the distiller products which they refer to end up coming from the Gulf Coast region of the country into the Northeast region. But we still have petroleum products that are coming in from Venezuela, from the Virgin Islands and from Canada. It is important for this administration to be making sure that that fuel is getting into the market and that the prices are stabilized or decreasing. We are recognizing that even Iraq is withholding oil from the energy mix just to penalize people during this very difficult time. When we have aided the countries of Mexico and Venezuela and other countries, Saudi Arabia, we have aided them in their times of need, we are asking the President and the Secretary of Energy to engage in strong measures to make sure that those countries recognize that we need them to increase the output. We are looking at gasoline prices being at record levels. Tourist season is down the road and one of the largest industries in our region of the country and we are going to see this negatively impacted.

As a matter of reference, there was testimony today before the Transportation appropriations subcommittee that because of the higher prices of fuel, we are seeing a decline in automobile and truck traffic and we are seeing a negative impact on our surface transportation dollars that were gauged for a certain amount of activity, we are seeing a negative impact. We have seen a negative impact on agriculture estimated by the United States Department of Agriculture, \$1 billion of lost farm income because of the circumstances here that we are looking at with these higher costs that have to be borne by the farmers. We are seeing it going across the board.

I recognize that there may be some regions of the country that are not experiencing these higher prices. But I also recognize that we have the impact that goes across the board. One thing has always been certain here in Congress, when one part of the country has been hurting, we all stand together because at other times through our country's history in the last years, we have seen these impacts throughout the country on a national basis with emergencies and disasters.

We are asking for comprehensive legislation with these special orders, we are asking for action on the part of the administration so that people do not have to be victimized in the Northeast again.

#### LIVE FIRE MILITARY TRAINING ON PUERTO RICAN ISLAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, a tragedy has recently occurred in the defense of our Nation and the protection of the men and women who serve in its defense. Specifically, we sent our USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, into a high threat area without the proper training and instruction required. The frustrating point about it was the training was available, planned and scheduled. But due to political considerations, it was canceled, leaving our Marines and sailors vulnerable and frankly unprepared.

I am speaking about Vieques, a tiny island that is part of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico that the Department of the Navy has been using since 1950 as a live fire bombing range. The range provides the ability for the Navy and Marine Corps to conduct simulated amphibious landing operations while using combined arms of artillery, naval gunfire, and close air support. It serves as the culminating exercise for a series of workups that the ARG goes through prior to deploying to the Mediterranean for a 6-month cruise. Vieques is a unique training site. It is the only facility on the East Coast with unfettered air and sea space, deep water access, amphibious landing beaches, nearby military ports and airfields, and the capability to support live naval gunfire operations. Additionally, it allows the Navy and Marine Corps to conduct amphibious combined arms training, Naval surface fire support training, end-to-end strike training and high altitude air tactics. Our Marines and sailors are combat ready for all contingencies because of the realistic live fire training afforded by Vieques. The current situation on Vieques where the President ordered a cease to all operations on the range initially and has since worked out a "deal" with the Governor of Puerto Rico where inert ordnance vice live ordnance will be used turns this into a readiness issue. If our Marines and sailors cannot train, they will not be ready. We send them to hostile areas to protect a presence, show the Flag, with the understanding that if crises should arise, they will be prepared to quell it. I am here to report that we have dictated a mission that cannot be accomplished. Yet the solution is simple. Open the Vieques range to live fire bombing, naval gunfire, and artillery.

We allow live fire bombing in nearly every State of the union. Why would we stop bombing a commonwealth when bombs continue to be dropped and rounds fired in Utah, Nevada, California, Florida and other places? Might I add that these bombs and rounds are fired in closer proximity to our civilian population, more so than on Vieques where there is a 10-mile buffer zone.